***Franklin Public Schools***

***Literacy – Detailed Assessment Info STARTING POINT Grade 6***

General Info

* This information is meant to be used with the “Literacy Assessment Directions Gr 6” handout...to provide more in-depth information on assessment and grading.
* In a nutshell, whenever the Teacher’s Manual (*Making Meaning; Making Meaning Vocabulary; Being A Writer;* or Social Skills (in *MM*) provides a prompt for an assessment, you will have a rubric to use from among the assessment handouts to assign a rating. The rubric ratings are points-based, so they can be used as a grade in PowerGrade. The rubrics can also be used informally for formative purposes and for communicating with students and parents.
* The purpose of all of the assessment handouts is to provide guidance and suggestions (a “road map”) for teachers to use as they implement the elementary literacy curriculum/program.
* The assessment materials that are posted on the Academy Wiki (and will later be posted in *Eclipse*) are meant to be a starting point for the 2011-12 school year. Changes will be made based on teachers’ feedback and ideas as they become more familiar with the programs and materials.
* The assessment materials are either directly from the Developmental Studies Center (DSC) materials, use the language from the materials, and/or are rubrics that are easier to use and more useful than those provided in the DSC materials.
* The assessment materials represent an alignment among the DSC activities, the suggested and required assessments, and the revised report card categories.
* Grading is to be based on scores from rubric ratings in each area, *Making Meaning Vocabulary*  assessments, and teacher-made assessments or observations that are developed during implementation. More on grading in the “Report Card” section.
* There are only two *required* assessments for all students to experience:

1. “Individual Writing Assessment” from *Being A Writer* Assessment (*BAW*) Resource Book (Administered three times per year in Qtrs 1, 2, and 4 as noted in the *Being A Writer* Teacher’s Manual (Fall, Winter, Spring)
2. “Word Checks” in *Making Meaning Vocabulary* (*MMV*) Black Line Masters (BLM) Book, (Administered 7 times per year as noted in the *Making Meaning Vocabulary* Teacher’s Manual.)

The rubrics that are provided for Reading, Vocabulary, and Speaking & Listening are handy, aligned with the language of the DSC materials and recommended, but can be used at teachers’ discretion.

Use of Reading Strategies

* Each student is to receive a letter grade, an effort rating (1, 2, 3), and Skills and Concepts ratings (+, \*, /) in the sub-categories each quarter. (Note that the na code definition was changed to “Not Assessed,” providing flexibility, depending on the pacing of the new program.)
* The *Making Meaning* Teacher’s Manual prompts teachers to assess students’ use of reading strategies in two ways:

1. Whole Class
2. Individual Reading Assessments (to be done in IDR or other observation/ interactive times)

However, there is little guidance on what to observe. This is why the Reading Rubric that is provided can come in handy. You can share the rubric with students, and use it informally as a guide for notes that you might take on reading behaviors or you can use a rating from the rubric to post a grade in *PowerGrade*. (The 10, 9, 8, 7 point scale is handy because you could use the rating that you assign as a 10-point rating or as some multiple of 10 (20, 30, etc.) if you want to weight it more.) The rubric clarifies expectations and provides you as the teacher with a way to communicate with students informally about how to get to the next level, and it provides you with a basis for grading as often as you see appropriate.

Word Study

Each student is to receive a letter grade in this category each quarter. The grade is to be determined from two sources: The student’s use and understanding of the *Making Meaning Vocabulary* words and the student’s degree of accuracy in spelling from the *Sitton Spelling* program.

In the categories of Vocabulary and Spelling on the report card, each student is to receive a rating of +, \*, / .

Word Study – Vocabulary

The *Making Meaning Vocabulary* program is based on vocabulary words used in the Read-Alouds in *Making Meaning.* The vocabulary program lags behind *Making Meaning* Read-Alouds by a week. That is, the vocabulary words used in *MM* Read-Alouds in one week will be studied by students in the *MMV* materials the following week.

There are two types of assessments for the *Making Meaning Vocabulary* program:

1. “Individual Vocabulary Assessments” These are found in the Black Line Master book that comes with the

*MMV* materials. (Administered seven times per year as noted in the *MMV* Teacher’s Manual, the grades from these can be placed in the quarter where you are teaching at the time, but you can attempt to spread them out, so that there are some in each quarter.) These assessments are in different formats each week. There are 8 words tested on each of these assessments, so the vocabulary rubric should also be used to provide a measure of how a student is understanding and using the vocabulary words.

1. Use of the *Making Meaning Vocabulary* Rubric. The MMV Teacher’s Manual suggests an assessment of the class every two weeks. The real frequency that you have will depend on the manageability of the program. You can use the rubric as you observe your class to get an idea of how the group is using and understanding the vocabulary words. You can also use this rubric for individual student ratings to get scores to post in PowerGrade. The rubric was developed with language taken directly from the *MMV* materials.

Word Study – Spelling

The ratings for students’ performance in spelling will be based on what is learned at the training at the summer academy. There are multiple ways to assess students’ accuracy in spelling of priority words as they write.

Use of Writing Strategies

* Each student is to receive a letter grade, and effort rating (1, 2, 3), and Skills and Concepts ratings (+, \*, /) in the sub-categories each quarter.
* The *Being A Writer* Teacher’s Manual prompts teachers to assess the effectiveness of students’ use of writing strategies in two ways:

1. Whole Class
2. Individual Writing Assessment

The Enhanced Writing Rubric is to be used to score students’ writing for both of these assessments. The Fall Individual Writing Assessment is to be administered early in Qtr 1, though only the scores of the traits that are taught that quarter should be included in the Qtr grade. The Winter Individual Writing Assessment should be administered later in Qtr 2. The Spring Individual Writing Assessment should be administered in Qtr 4. There is no Individual Writing Assessment required in Qtr. 3, though you can use one with a different prompt if desired.

The Enhanced Writing Rubric should also be used to assign individual student ratings for placement in the PowerGrade as appropriate. As the program calls for one of the traits to be taught, you can assign a rating on only that one part of the rubric. This can be done during any of the “Writing Time” segments that the BAW Teacher’s Manual calls for daily.

Finally, the Enhanced Writing Rubric can be used as you observe your class overall...how many students would be at each rating level? This is formative information that can be used to inform your instruction.

Speaking & Listening

* There is no letter grade for this area. Each student is to receive a Skills & Concepts rating (+,\*, /) in the sub-categories.
* The Social Skills Assessment component of the *Making Meaning* program to get ratings for this area. The Teacher’s Manual prompts you to observe/assess students’ social skills. See the accompanying handout entitled, “Literacy Speaking & Listening” for details.

Report Card/PowerSchool

* The report card categories are aligned to the components of the DSC materials and the Literacy EKS.
* The coding is the same as it was in the past on the report cards with one exception: “na” is now defined as “Not Assessed.” This means that the skill/concept may be taught during the grading period, but is not formally assessed as part of the grade. There are different aspects of the curriculum that are focused on in the materials during each grading period, and those are the ones that receive a rating and make up the letter grade for that area (Reading, Writing, Word Study). It is not reasonable to expect that all aspects are directly taught and assessed all at the same time. This will be communicated to parents on a Parent Info Sheet.
* The rubrics that are provided are points-based with scores of 10, 9, 8, 7. Ratings assigned for a student’s performance or work can be directly entered into PowerGrade. Any particular rating can be weighted by using multiples of 10. This makes the rubrics handy to use for grading purposes.
* Even though rubrics and other assessment methods are provided with the assessment handouts, you may want to use other assignments and assessments that you enter into PowerGrade to determine students’ grades. It is important to remember that the assignments or assessment results need to be aligned to the EKS and/or be consistent with the goals of the DSC materials. Only student work that is related to the literacy areas should be included in the work that contributes to grades.
* In an area like literacy where the development of skills is emphasized, it is important when grading to make efforts to capture the level of skill or understanding that a student has at the point in time of the grading period. There is substantial research that supports teachers’ ability to make effective comparisons of students’ performance and understanding to clear expectations. For these reasons, it is ok to use the PowerGrade “over-ride” feature for the quarter grade where there is evidence to support it. This situation sometimes arises when a student has lower ratings in the beginning of a grading period, but catches on later and shows increases in learning the skill. It is appropriate to not penalize a student for the lower scores early on, which can sometimes happen when averages are used as they are in PowerGrade.
* The Word Study grade is to be determined through a combination of the ratings and grades from the *Making Meaning Vocabuary* program and the *Sitton Spelling* program. This way that these are combined and weighted is at teachers’ discretion. During implementation more detailed strategies for this will be determined. In cases at grades 5 and 6 where there are different teachers responsible for teaching Reading (Vocabulary) and Writing (Spelling), PowerGrade is being programmed so that each teacher will have access to enter grades that contribute to the Word Study grade. It is important that teachers in each school’s situation collaborate on how they do this, so that they have a common understanding of the final Word Study grade. As the programming of this feature takes place during the summer, information about it will be assembled and provided for teachers in August when school resumes.

Units By Quarters

* The “Units By Quarters” handout is being provided as a starting point for pacing in *Making Meaning* and *Being A Writer*. It will be helpful in planning as it gives an idea of how much of the program might be implemented in each grading period.
* The units are laid out so that they are, in most cases, completed during a given quarter. However, as we move ahead and completing a unit in one quarter doesn’t work, it is ok to start a unit in one grading period, but complete it in another grading period.
* The following principles were followed in laying out the units by quarters (per discussions with DSC staff/trainers):

*Making Meaning*: Keep the units in the original sequence because they build on

each other.

Preserve Units 1 and 2 and implement them fully, as the procedures

that students learn are used throughout the program. There are to

be no compromises on this. Several teachers who have experience

with the workshop model supported this.

Another reason for keeping the *MM* units in the original sequence is

that the *Making Meaning Vocabulary* program sequence is tied to it.

*Being A Writer*: The sequence of these units can be changed as long as:

Preserve Units 1 and 2 in the beginning and implement them fully;

and we keep the Personal Narrative early in the year, as it is the

most straightforward genre for students to begin with. The units and

sequence for Gr 6 has been revised to align with the middle school

literacy program.

Parent Communication

* Parents will be provided with a Literacy Parent Information sheet each quarter. It will be posted on the district and school website. It is a two-column sheet that has a description of the workshop model on one side and the names of the units of study or areas of emphasis for the quarter on the other side.
* Details like the chang in the defnition of “na” and other information can be provided.
* Appropriate communication by principals at Back to School activities and other communication situations will be provided to help parents understand that we are implementing an exciting new literacy program.

Rationale/Premise/Direction for the Literacy Assessment Starting Point

* Grades should represent students’ learning.
* The assessment materials represent an alignment among the DSC activities, the suggested and required assessments, and the revised report card categories.
* The assessment materials that are posted on the Academy Wiki (and will later be posted in *Eclipse*) are meant to be a starting point for the 2011-12 school year. Changes will be made based on teachers’ feedback and ideas as they become more familiar with the programs and materials.
* The materials and suggestions in the assessment system starting point are meant to have an emphasis on manageability from the teacher’s point of view. The materials are meant to be a support for the implementation, to help organize the work, and provide options for teachers in how they determine grades. At the same time the rubrics that are provided can also be used formatively for instructional purposes.
* The best referencing system for grades is content-specific; a criterion-referenced approach, and this assessment system starting point is based directly on the concepts and skills of the *DSC* and *Sitton Spelling* programs.
* There are powerful benefits of using rubrics:

•For teaching: Useful for giving clear, high quality feedback

•For teaching: Useful in fashioning next steps for students to take

•For teaching: Useful for showing a student the relationship of her/his academic performance in relation to a target or higher level of performance.

•For teaching: Provides more accurate description of what a student is learning.

•For teaching: Clarity of expectations

* Rubrics encourage teachers to consider information within and across items; the point method does not. When using a rubric, teachers tend to consider multiple items as a set, rather than individually. When viewed as a set, the items provide more information than when viewed individually.

* Research:

-Rubric scoring has been shown to have a higher correlation to outside standardized test scores than “points” scoring. (Marzano, 2000; Wright & Wise, 1998; O’Donnell & Woolfork, 1999; Wiggins,1995; Guskey, 1996b; Ornstein, 1994).

-There is a higher correlation between rubric scores and outside testing results than between grades and outside testing results (Wright & Wise, 1998).

-The use of rubrics contribute student achievment (Wilburn & Phelps, 1983; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1986).

* In summary, the assessment system starting point is meant to meet the following criteria:

•Balance (manageability and more accurate, descriptive evaluation and grading).

•Alignment from/to EKS, materials, activities, assessments, evaluation, grading, communication w/parents.

•Based in the curriculum (criterion- referenced).

•Adheres to the Assessment Principles.

•Compares student understanding and skills to targets/standards.

•Balance between reliability and validity.

•Has maximum opportunity to contribute to student achievement.

* For questions, comments, suggestions for improvement, contact Mike Zellmer or your principal.